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# Healthy Living

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## Whole Fruits Tied to Lower Diabetes Risk

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### Whole Fruits Tied to Lower Diabetes Risk

But fruit juices appeared to raise risk for type 2 disease in long-term study

It's no secret that fruit is good for you. But what kind? A new study links whole fruits —especially blueberries, grapes and apples—to a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, but suggests that fruit juices may actually raise the risk.

The design of the study, however, doesn't allow it to prove that whole fruits or fruit juices directly affect the risk of diabetes.

"While fruits are recommended as a measure for diabetes prevention, previous studies have found mixed results for total fruit consumption," senior author Qi Sun, an assistant professor in the department of nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health, said in a school news release. "Our findings provide novel evidence suggesting that certain fruits may be especially beneficial for lowering diabetes risk."

The researchers base their findings on an analysis of nearly 190,000 people who took part in three studies from 1984 to 2008 and weren't initially diagnosed with diabetes, cardiovascular disease or cancer. About 7 percent of the participants were later diagnosed with diabetes.

People who ate fruits, especially blueberries, grapes and apples, at least twice a week were up to 23 percent less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who ate them no more than once a month, the researchers found. But those who drank a serving or more of fruit juice a day had an increased risk, up to 21 percent higher than the others.

What's going on? It's possible that something other than fruit and fruit juice consumption could explain the differences. Perhaps people who eat certain fruits

share something else in common that affects their risk of diabetes.

"Our data further endorse current recommendations on increasing whole fruits, but not fruit juice, as a measure for diabetes prevention," lead study author Isao Muraki, a research fellow with the Harvard School of Public Health department of nutrition, said in the news release "And our novel findings may help refine this recommendation to facilitate diabetes prevention."

### Your Smartphone May Be Making You Fat

Heavy use tied to sedentary lifestyle, less fitness in study of college students

Smartphone users just might be the new couch potatoes.

Researchers studying college students found that cell-phone use—much like watching television—may significantly decrease physical activity and fitness levels.

"Using a cellphone doesn't have the same kind of negative stigma that sitting on the couch and watching TV has, but it can be just as bad for you," said study co-author Jacob Barkley, an associate professor of exercise science at Kent State University in Ohio.

The study found that students spend an average of almost five hours on their cellphones and send hundreds of text messages every day, Barkley said.

Cellphones — also called smartphones—have become multifunction devices with capabilities similar to an Internet-connected computer. Virtually anywhere and always, users can not only make calls and send texts and emails, but they can interact with Twitter, search the Internet, watch videos and live events, and play video and other games.

All these activities are essentially sedentary, the researchers noted.

Despite the fact that cellphones are mobile devices, they slow people down, Barkley said. Texting on the way to the bus stop, people walk more slowly, trying to do two things at once. Going to the park for a run, they stop to look for



A new study links whole fruits—especially blueberries, grapes and apples—to a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes.

**TAKE CARE  
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**JIM ROHN**



Smartphones have enormous capacity to significantly change people's lifestyles and health habits

# Your Smartphone May Be Making You Fat

messages, check movie times and make a date. Walking past a beautiful scene, they halt and take a photo, and then send it to their friends via Facebook.

"Before you know if you've fallen down into this little wormhole sitting on a park bench, playing on your phone," Barkley said.

Smartphones have enormous capacity to significantly change people's lifestyles and health habits, a public health expert agreed.

"We have to look at this similar to what happened in the industrial revolution and how it changed us," said Nancy Copperman, director of public health initiatives at North Shore-LIJ Health System, in Great Neck, N.Y. "A study like this raises the importance of how this technology affects how we move, eat and sleep. We have to look at the impact of technology on our health."

Copperman said heavy cellphone use can create mindless eating, much as television does. If you're using your cellphone during much of your time awake, you have to sometimes be eating while using the device, she said.

Cellphone use can also affect sleep, study co-author Barkley noted. He said some students have been known to "sleep text" - sending messages while they're sleeping and not remembering they did it when they wake up.

Copperman said she worries that while this study focused on college students who were about 20 years of age, many of today's elementary school students are just as tethered to smartphones. "This is probably affecting physical activity in younger kids now too," she said.

For the study, the researchers surveyed more than 300 college students about their cellphone use, leisure activities and physical activity. Then 49 students used a treadmill test to evaluate their heart and lung fitness.

In that group, those who spent a lot of time on their cellphones—up to 14 hours daily—were less fit than participants who only averaged about 1.5 hours of use.

The findings took into account factors such as gender, percentage of body fat and "self-efficacy: — the participant's confidence that he or she could be active in a variety of settings, Barkley said.

High-frequency cellphone users tended to report they were involved in more sedentary activities than were low-frequency users. The researchers said that high cellphone users may also be attracted to other forms of digital media such as television, movies, computers and video games.

However, the research can't conclude that cellphones are causing people to be less fit, Barkley acknowledged. "It's possible that less fit people use their cellphones more," he said.

Copperman offered some practical

advice. She thinks parents should monitor not just what their children are doing on their smartphones, but how frequently they are using them. Adults should start monitoring themselves, too, she suggested, noting if they're interrupting physical activity by using their phones, or making their cellphone their dinner companion.

"People should take time from their cellular technology for a better quality of life," Copperman said.

## 10 Brain Foods for Kids

As fast as children whiz from classroom to activity to home and back again, their brains are just as actively and dramatically growing and changing.

"These years are critical for brain development, and what they eat affects focus and cognitive skills," psychiatrist Drew Ramsey, MD, coauthor of *The Happiness Diet*, says.

Food is one of many factors that affect a child's brain development. The following 10 foods can help kids stay sharp all day long, and affect brain development well into the future.



### 1. Eggs

Eating a high-nutrient protein like eggs (which have nutrients including choline, omega-3s, zinc, and lutein) will help kids concentrate, Beth Saltz, RD, says.

**How to Serve It:** Fold scrambled eggs into a whole-grain tortilla for a filling breakfast or late-afternoon snack. "The protein-carb combo tides kids over until the next meal with no sugar-induced energy crash," Saltz says.

### 2. Greek Yogurt

Fat is important to brain health, says Laura Lagano, RD. A full-fat Greek yogurt (which has more protein than other yogurts) can help keep brain cell membranes flexible, helping them to send and receive information.

**How to Serve it:** Pack Greek yogurt in lunch with some fun mix-ins: cereal with at least 3 grams of fiber and blueberries for a dose of nutrients called polyphenols.

or add a few dark chocolate chips. Polyphenols in cocoa are thought to keep the mind sharp by hiking brain blood flow.

### 3. Greens

Full of folate and vitamins, spinach and kale are part of a healthy diet linked to lower odds of getting dementia later in life. "Kale contains sulforaphane a molecule that has detoxifying abilities, and diindolylmethane, which helps new brain cells grow," says Ramsey, coauthor of *50 Shades of Kale*.

#### How to Serve It:

- Whip spinach into smoothies for snack time
- Add it to omelets
- Sauté it at dinner drizzled with olive oil (the dash of fat helps your body absorb vitamins)

Make chips out of kale. Cut kale from stems/ribs, drizzle with olive oil and a bit of salt, and bake.

### 4. Purple Cauliflower

Low in sugar, high in fiber, and full of folate and B6 that help regulate mood, memory, and attention, purple cauliflower also delivers inflammation-fighting nutrients called anthocyanins.

**How to Serve it:** Roast and puree cauliflower to make a nutritious dipping sauce for carrots and other veggies such as peppers, celery, and radishes.

### 5. Fish

Naturally fatty fish are a good source of vitamin D and omega-3s, which protect the brain against cognitive decline and memory loss. Salmon, tuna, and sardines are all rich in omega-3s.

"The more omega-3s we can get to the brain, the better it will function and the better kids will be able to focus," says Bonnie Taub-Dix, RD, author of *Read It Before You Eat It*.

**How to Serve It:** Grill it, roast it, or add it to a salad or sandwich.

### 6. "Clean" Meat

"Animal fat is where pesticides and antibiotics are stored. A high toxic load can contribute to brain fog," Lagano says.

# When It Comes to Food, Be Safe Not Sorry

For better behavior and focus, choose meats (and other foods) that are free of artificial ingredients, dyes, flavoring, preservatives, and sweeteners.

**How to Serve It:** Ditch deli sandwich meat for preservative-free roast beef left over from last night's "clean" dinner.

## 7. Nuts and Seeds

Packed with protein, essential fatty acids, and vitamins and minerals, nuts and seeds may boost mood and keep your nervous system happy.

**How to Serve it:** Spread sunflower seed butter—rich in folate, vitamin E, and selenium—on a whole-grain cracker or bread. Or make pesto: Nuts combined with olive oil and dark leafy greens make a healthful sauce for whole-grain pasta.

## 8. Oatmeal

Protein- and fiber-rich oatmeal helps keep heart and brain arteries clear in one study, kids who ate sweetened oatmeal did better on memory-related academic tasks than those who ate a sugary cereal.

**How to Serve It:** Add cinnamon. Compounds in the spice may protect brain cells, preliminary research shows.



## 9. Apples and Plums

Kids often crave sweets, especially when they're feeling sluggish. Apples and plums are lunchbox-friendly and contain quercetin, an antioxidant that may fight cognitive decline, according to lab studies.

**How to Serve It:** The good stuff is often in the skin of fruit, so buy organic and wash well.

## 10. Turmeric

"The curcumin in turmeric can actually make the brain grow," Ramsey says.

He says studies show curcumin fights inflammation and blocks Alzheimer's plaque formation.

**How to Serve It:** Visit an Indian rest-



aurant or experiment with Indian recipes. Even if your child just eats the puri (fried bread), they'll likely get some curcumin benefits and be primed to be more adventurous eaters.

## When It Comes to Food, Be Safe Not Sorry

Experts offer advice to ensure healthy eating

Keeping up on food safety and nutrition can be confusing. One day a food is reported as good for you, and the next a study finds that it's not so healthy after all. It also can be frightening when a foodborne illness outbreak occurs.

But eating isn't optional. So, food safety and nutrition experts offer their best advice on what you need to know to eat healthily and safely.

### 1. Rely on thermometers.

If there's one message Tina Hanes, a registered dietician and nurse with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, wants you to remember, it's to check the temperature of your foods with a thermometer.

"Color and texture aren't reliable indicators of how safe a food is," said Hanes. "You have to use a food thermometer to ensure that food is cooked to a safe temperature." For whole cuts of beef, pork or lamb, that means cooking them to a minimum of 145 degrees F and letting them rest for three minutes when they come out of the oven. All poultry, including ground poultry, should be cooked to 165 degrees F. Ground meats should be cooked to 160 degrees F.

The best way to take the temperature of such foods as hamburger or chicken breast is to go in through the side to the thickest part of the meat. Hanes suggests using oven-safe thermometers or instant-read thermometers designed for meat.

### 2. Carbohydrates and gluten may not be your enemy.

For some time, dieters have been shunning carbohydrates, and the latest food craze appears to be forgoing gluten, a protein found in wheat. People with celiac disease, an autoimmune condition that affects a person's ability to process gluten safely, definitely need to avoid gluten. But, according to Amy Frasier, a registered dietitian with Bastyr University in Kenmore, Wash., there's no evidence

that people who do not have celiac disease or a gluten sensitivity will benefit from a gluten-free diet.

Along the same vein, dieters who've been trying to stay away from carbohydrates should make sure they're not missing out on vital nutrients.

"Carbohydrates are the primary source of energy for the human body," Frasier said. "Many carbohydrate foods provide us with essential nutrients. Refined carbohydrates such as sugars, candy and processed grains can be very low in nutrients, but other carbohydrates can be exceptionally good for the body, such as vegetables, fruits and whole grains like quinoa, brown rice and barley."

### 3. Leave it.

You might have heard of the "five-second rule." Some people say that if you drop food on the floor and pick it up quickly — within five seconds — it's still safe to eat.

Not so, said Frasier. "Bacteria can adhere to food immediately upon contact," she said. Thus, from a food safety standpoint, the five-second rule is a myth.



### 4. Keep it separate.

You also may have heard that you should keep raw meat and produce separate, and that it's a good idea to have separate cutting boards for each. But have you ever thought about the things that might be contaminating your countertops and tables?

"In my house, nothing goes on the counter — no purses, no school bags," said Cheryl Luptowski, a public information officer with NSF International, a nonprofit safety organization. "It's just not a good idea to put anything that was sitting on a floor somewhere on your counter or kitchen table."

She also said people who use reusable bags should make sure they have separate bags for groceries and other items. And, she said, all grocery bags should be washable.

### 5. Ponder produce selections.

Are organic foods worth the extra cost? Frasier said that results from

on the nutritional content of organic produce have been mixed, so it's not clear if they provide any extra nutritional benefits. However, these foods do provide a clear benefit for reducing exposure to pesticides and additives in your foods.

And, whether organically grown or not, have you ever wondered if it's really safe to eat prepackaged salads, baby carrots and more? Hanes said that if the products are labeled as "ready to eat" or "prewashed," they should be safe to eat right out of the bag.

### 6. Watch the time.

When you're out shopping, keep an eye on how long you let perishable food sit in your car. During the winter, when temperatures are below 40 degrees F, you have considerable leeway, Luptowski noted. But on hot summer days, you have less than an hour to get your food home.

Hanes recommends putting a cooler in the car if you know you're going to be out for a bit. Better yet, both experts said, make the grocery store your last stop and pick up perishable foods at the end of your shopping trip.

If you lose your power, food in the fridge (if it's been closed) will generally stay safe for about four hours. How long food in the freezer lasts depends on how full your freezer is. In a half-full freezer, food will stay frozen for about 24 hours, Hanes said, but in a full freezer, it might stay frozen up to 48 hours.

### 7. Skip the energy buzz.



Energy drinks often contain large doses of caffeine and other stimulants, but these products aren't regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration. "Mega doses of caffeine from any source can have harmful side effects," said Frasier. "Also, little research has been done to show the impacts of combining caffeine with other stimulant ingredients included in many energy drinks."

Children, pregnant women and anyone with high blood pressure or heart disease should avoid these drinks, she said.

"Consumers should consider why they are low in energy and using energy drinks in the first place," Frasier said. "A balanced diet, regular exercise, stress reduction and adequate sleep should reduce the need for energy drink consumption."



# Aspirin May Lower Women's Colon Cancer Risk

## 8. Clean It.

Many people use their kitchen sponges for a variety of tasks which often makes the kitchen sponge the germiest thing in a kitchen, said Luptowski. But, she said, "you can prolong the life of your sponge by wetting it, and then microwaving it for two minutes to kill the germs."

She also recommends having separate sponges for human dishes and dog bowls because, contrary to popular belief, Fido's mouth just isn't very clean.

If you've prepared food that could potentially harbor bacteria, such as raw meat, Luptowski suggested running your dishwasher on the sanitizing cycle. The cycle takes longer and used more energy, but it ensures that any pathogens are killed. Those who don't have a dishwasher, she said, can sanitize dishes by washing them in hot, soapy water, then dunking them in a gallon of hot water with a capful of bleach in it and then rinsing the dishes.

## Aspirin May Lower Women's Colon Cancer Risk

Benefit must be weighed against GI bleeding, other risk, however, experts say

Taking a low-dose aspirin every other day may reduce the risk of colorectal cancer, according to a study that focused on nearly 40,000 women aged 45 or older.

The protection does seem to take some time to surface, said researcher Nancy Cook, a professor of medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School. "After 10 years, we started to see an effect," she noted. "After 18 years of follow-up, we saw a 20 percent reduction in colon cancer over the whole time period," she said. When they looked at the 10-to-18 year mark, the reduction was 42 percent, she said.

However, risks linked with aspirin, such as gastrointestinal bleeding, must be considered, Cook said.

The study, funded by the U.S. National Cancer Institute and U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, is published July 16 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Aspirin has been long known for its



protective effects on heart health, but the protective effect of aspirin on colon and rectal cancer has only been found more recently. "In the past three years, analyses of trials conducted for cardiovascular health have begun to show an effect on colon cancer as well," Cook said.

Cook and her team followed women enrolled in the Women's Health Study, a trial that evaluated the benefits and risks of low-dose aspirin and vitamin E in preventing both cardiovascular disease and cancers.

The study began in 1993 and ended in 2004. The women had no history of cancer (except nonmelanoma skin cancer), cardiovascular disease or other major chronic illness when they enrolled.

The women assigned to the aspirin group were told to take a low dose — 100 milligrams — of aspirin every other day. The comparison group took placebo pills on alternate days.

After the study ended, the researchers continued to follow more than 33,000 women through March 2012. The women were told to continue the regimen, although the researchers no longer provided the pills.

The researchers tracked colorectal cancer, along with other cancers. They found the 20 percent lower colorectal cancer incidence over the entire 18-year follow-up.

They did not find a difference with cancer deaths between groups, but Cook said there may not have been enough women to show a comparative difference from a statistical point of view.

Cook found no difference in colorectal polyps between groups. Polyps are removed when they are found on colonoscopy as they can progress to cancer.

The aspirin group had more gastrointestinal bleeding, a known side effect, and more peptic ulcers. While 8.3 percent of the aspirin group had GI bleeding, 7.3 percent of the placebo group did. Peptic ulcers affected 7.3 percent of the aspirin group but only 6.2 percent of the placebo group.

While the study included only women, Cook said the results would probably apply to men, too. Other aspirin studies that looked at the effects of the drug, she said, have included mainly men.

Even with the double benefit of heart

and colon protection, Cook said, "You really need to balance risks and benefits."

Dr. Anthony Starpoli, a gastroenterologist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, agreed that patients should be carefully selected for aspirin therapy.

Before a doctor suggests aspirin for the colon protection, Starpoli said, the important question is. "Am I really reducing their risk of colon cancer or am I increasing their risk of GI bleeding?"

The strength of the study, he said, is the large number of women. However, he does not think the findings translate to a global recommendation that everyone over 45 take alternate day aspirin for colon cancer risk reduction.

"There may be a subgroup of patients at high risk who could benefit."

Those with a family history of colon cancer or who have had polyps have a higher than average risk.

The side effect of GI bleeding needs to be taken seriously, Starpoli said. "The nature of GI bleeding from nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) or aspirin is somewhat unpredictable," he said. And it can be serious and even fatal.

For those hoping to take an aspirin for the double benefit of heart and colon health, would alternate day protect their heart enough?

Generally, daily aspirin is recommended for heart disease risk reduction. Cook said. However, "the Physicians' Health Study showed a benefit for alternate day, but the dose was 325 milligrams of regular aspirin," she added.

This year, more than 102,000 new colon cancers and more than 40,000 rectal cancers will be diagnosed, the American Cancer Society estimates.

## Skepticism Needed When Buying Foods Labeled 'Healthy'

Products to avoid include veggie chips, muffins and frozen yogurt, dietitian says

Clever food labeling can fool well-intentioned consumers into believing that foods labeled sugar-free, fat-free or whole-wheat are healthy choices, a dietitian says. "Consumer food marketing can be extremely persuasive, and the right buzzword on a package can lure a shopper into making an unwise purchase," Kari Kooi, a registered dietitian at the Methodist Hospital in

Houston, said in a Hospital news release. "We need to educate consumers on how to read nutrition labels so they can avoid falling prey to the 'health halo' effect. "Studies have shown that this "health halo" effect leads some people to eat twice as much or more of these foods because they are marketed as healthy, she says.

Five food Kooi recommends avoiding :

- Vegetable chips. These are marketed as healthy substitutes for vegetables but the nutrition labels on most brands read the same as potato chips. Many of the vegetables' nutrients are lost in the processing of these chips. Choose real vegetables instead.
- Nutrient-enhanced waters. Most are nothing more than colored sugar water that contain empty calories that contribute to weight gain. Claims that some of these products are a healthy choice because of added vitamins are just marketing hype, Kooi said. Taking a daily multivitamin with a glass of water is a better option, she said.
- Muffins. If they're sprinkled with a few oats or packed with blueberries, consumers think they're a healthier choice than donuts. But muffins are really nothing more than cupcakes without icing, said Kooi. She also noted that mega-size muffins sold in coffee shops can contain 500 to 600 calories.
- Premade smoothies. Most commercial ready-made smoothies are loaded with sugar and calories. You're better off making your own smoothies with high-quality, nourishing ingredients such as low-fat Greek yogurt, skim milk and fresh or frozen fruits, Kooi says.
- Frozen yogurt. Although made with low-fat or fat-free dairy ingredients, frozen yogurt typically contains high amounts of added sugar. Many of the live and active cultures added to frozen yogurt cannot survive freezing, so you won't get any probiotic benefits, Kooi said. Probiotics help maintain the balance between good and bacteria in the digestive tract.